Library changes add whole new dimension

"People keep coming in and saying it has changed so much, so it must really be dramatic," said Camas librarian Carolyn Langham of the newly remodeled library.

The building, which reopened Monday of last week after a week of intensive, last-stage remodeling now boasts a floor space nearly twice the size it formally occupied. The renovations at the old city hall building at NE Fourth and Franklin have been progressing since last April, at a total cost of about $215,000.

CAROLYN LANGHAM
. . . Camas librarian

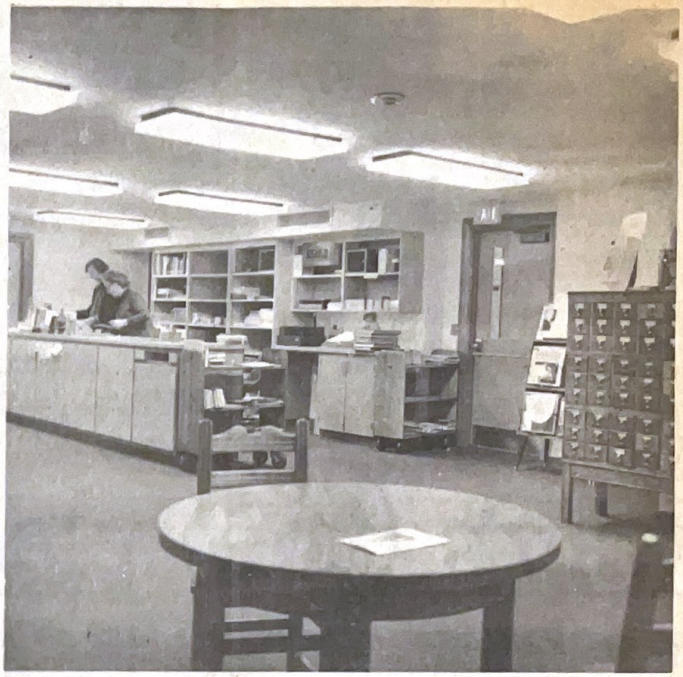
The library now will accommodate from 10 to 15 years of expansion needs, Miss Langham said. She noted that shelving capacity had not increased, but the extra square footage provides the potential for floor shelves when the need arises.

One improvement Miss Langham is especially pleased with is the new young people's room. A former truck garage in the building, it is nearly twice the size of the former room located upstairs. It is lighter and brighter and provides easier access to books, she said.

She said this room may eventually be used for listening to music and training sessions.

Not the traditional sort of "shhhh, please" librarian, Miss Langham is pleased that the room will provide for the needs of young people who are not always inclined to speak in hushed tones.

For those who want quiet, however, there is the adult section, separated by an expansive front desk area. There are lounge chairs and magazines for those who may only want a few moments of peace and quiet.



THE NEWLY remodeled interior of the Camas Public Library allows a more spacious atmosphere, increasing total square footage from the previous 6,800 square feet to the present 22,500 square feet. The front desk area, seen here with circulation assistants Daphne Raynor and Lynn Pierson, provides a buffer zone between an enlarged section for young people and the adult section. –POST Photo

In the lobby itself, there is a locked, glass display case. The library is actively seeking displays from persons who have interesting items to share. There may later be room to display paintings, as well.

Also in the lobby are reference books and materials, the card catalogue for the adult section, the biographies room, new books, record albums and the Northwest collection.

Among other advantages to the "new look," Miss Langham said, is the fact that the one-floor layout with a specially-equipped restroom, curb ramp and handicapped-person designated parking space will make it easier for persons in wheel chairs to visit the library.

She said the library, in some cases, will also provide book delivery service to persons housebound by a physical handicap.

Still another change many are still not quite used to is the new entrance on NE Franklin. Formerly, entrance was made on NE Fourth Avenue. This is now an emergency-only exit, and the walkway has been bulldozed for grass planting. Diagonal parking is also provided in 15 spaces in front of the new entrance.

But these changes did not come easily, Miss Langham said.

"The amount of help we had from the board members, the city and all sorts of people has just been tremendous," she said. "We couldn't have done it without this support."

Miss Langham, a new arrival to Camas, added, "I've really been pleased. People here do see this as their library. And that's just the sort of thing I'd hoped to find when I came here."

She said the spirit of cooperation can only help promote the library as a place that is "more responsive to the needs of the people."

An open house, to introduce residents to their new facility, is planned for sometime next month.

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